

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **ISSUES, GOALS AND STRATEGIES**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The development of a community takes place over a long period of time and the forces which cause growth or decline are not often noticed until significant directions have been established. Even in communities where little change seems to be occurring, the existing infrastructure ages, economic and social factors continue to change, and community concerns evolve.

Long-range community planning addresses this slow and eventual change by establishing a framework within which a community can direct its growth and change. The language of this framework uses terms such as issues, goals, strategies, plans, and policies, each of which has specific meaning in the Comprehensive Plan. For example, an **issue** may be defined as a matter of community concern based on community needs, existing problems, or opportunities. An issue can pertain to the entire city, or it may be specific to a smaller part of the community.

A community may express its intent to deal with an issue by formulating a **goal**. A goal is a community statement indicating the community objectives in dealing with a specific issue. Goals should represent a consensus arrived at through public consideration and discussion because, once adopted, they become official policy of the City.

A **strategy** is a tool for addressing an issue and pursuing its related goal. The strategy addresses how to proceed in making changes which may be required to address the issues and achieve the goals and objectives of the community. The Land Use Plan, Major Thoroughfare Plan, and Community Facility Plan put the community issues and goals into an action framework by defining them in a form that permits public discussion and action. These plans should comply with the Virginia Planning Statutes requirement "that Comprehensive Plans be general in nature". Once a Comprehensive Plan, or element thereof, has been adopted, more detailed

planning and implementation are performed by the agency having responsibility for that phase of the community's development.

This chapter focuses on defining issues related to development of the City of Hopewell, Virginia, and translating them into a set of workable goals and strategies. These issues, goals and strategies should be incorporated into the Land Use Plan which will follow in a succeeding chapter. The issues have been identified in part by technical analysis of the existing economy and physical conditions of the City. In addition, some of the issues stated here came from the 1984 and 1991 Comprehensive Plans, while others were identified during work sessions with the Planning Commission. The following pages provide an overview of the issues and a brief statement of goals and strategies for dealing with the issues in the Land Use Plan.

Two different types of issues will be discussed in this chapter. First will be the issues raised by the environmental and physical concerns. This section includes issues such as the RPA/RMA, wetlands, steep slopes, existing development, etc. The next section will deal with economic development issues such as the Oaklawn/Woodlawn corridor, the Central Business District/Downtown, Rt. 295 development, etc.

## PHYSICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

### Issue 1: Topography

Hopewell lies in the easternmost of Virginia's physiographic provinces called the Coastal Plain and near the "fall line": - the point that essentially divides the continent into mountainous land and that formed by erosion carried down from the mountains by erosion and resulting sediment.

The topography of Hopewell is well elevated starting at about eight feet above sea level at the mouth of the Appomattox River and reaching heights of about 80 feet. The highest ground in the City runs approximately parallel to Mesa Drive and Cedar Level Road in a north-south direction. It tapers off into several watersheds all of which drain eventually into the James River.

Generally, the physiography of the area has been favorable to development except for some areas that form the stream banks that both border and are internal to the City. Significant stream banks include the Appomattox River, James River, Cabin Creek and Baileys Creek. Steep slopes and other physical attributes including flood plains and wetlands have limited opportunities for developing many of these areas.

Goals	Planning Strategies or Policies
A. Encourage future development that carefully considers the physical nature of the topography of Hopewell.	A. Require in site plans careful engineering solutions to deal with rough topography to limit the disturbing of environmentally-sensitive areas and state waters.

## PHYSICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

### Issue 2: Existing Development

An analysis presented in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan found that the amount of vacant land had diminished to the point that it was insufficient to support the long-term growth of Hopewell within its present corporate limits. The study found that only 22 percent of the City's land was vacant; and that included land severely restricted by physical conditions as well as land held by industrial enterprises for their own future use. This situation remains in the year 2000, and has been made more severe by the development of some of the then-existing vacant land. During the past decade, development has been confined mostly to "infill" and such limited development that could be managed on the small amount of vacant land remaining within the City. Existing development has defined the urban structure of Hopewell which was defined previously as consisting of three major areas:

- (1) A City Urban Core that includes the older city that roughly is defined by the 1952 city boundaries (less the industrial area). The focus of development here is limited to "infill" or replacement of existing uses.
- (2) The Industrial Area that occupies most of the eastern part of the City. Development potential here is limited to just a few sites; most of the vacant land in the area is controlled by existing companies and is being reserved for their own use.
- (3) The Developing Perimeter that wraps around the western and southern part of the city (the approximate area of the 1969 annexation). There is still opportunity to develop more property in this area notwithstanding the limitations imposed by physical conditions. Additional commercial development potential exists in the I-295/Route 36 area.

Goals	Planning Strategies or Policies
A. Promote infill development and redevelopment of older urban areas.	A. Provide incentives to encourage infill and redevelopment (i.e., real estate tax waivers, adjustments to regulations, etc.)
B. Promote development within the developing perimeter that adheres to the guidelines of the Chesapeake Bay zoning regulations.	B. Prepare master plan for undeveloped areas within the developing perimeter to provide guidelines consistent with the Chesapeake Bay regulations.
C. Revitalize and refresh the Central Business District/Downtown to take advantage of its many unique assets.	C. Prepare revitalization plan including architectural guidelines, streetscaping, etc

## PHYSICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

### Issue 3: Soils Limitations

Soils in Hopewell do not appear to be significant barrier to development in that all development must be connected to public sewers (Septic tank usage is not an issue). Soil conditions that may be of concern are:

1. Drainage and runoff– Generally, Hopewell’s soils are well drained but the run-off potential, (precipitation that is not absorbed into the soil ranges from “severe” to “excessive”), combined with the large amount of impervious area (paving and rooftops), creates a situation where large volumes of water may carry pollutants to state waters.
2. Shrink-Swell – that capacity of the soil to expand or contract as moisture is gained or lost – is a concern where the shrink-swell ratio is very high. Fortunately most of the area of Hopewell that has been mapped has only moderate or low shrink-swell. It is only the area of high shrink-swell that may necessitate special engineering of foundations to compensate for changing conditions in the soil.

Goals	Planning Strategies or Policies
A. No net gain in pollutants from run-off and other non-point sources.	A. Utilize holding ponds to increase on-site retention of storm water.
B. Have all undelineated soils mapped before new structures are erected.	B. Increase use of pervious surfaces as paving where practicable.
	C. Require soil analysis for new non-residential buildings for engineering foundations, drainage facilities, etc.

## PHYSICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

### Issue 5: Chesapeake Bay Protected Areas

Hopewell, as well as all Tidewater communities, came under the Chesapeake Bay Regulations that established a sequence of steps for establishing a local program. The first priority of the program was to establish the “preservation areas”. In 1991 Hopewell adopted a model ordinance establishing RPAs and RMAs and at the same time delineated the RPAs according to CBLAD’s criteria; namely that they included: (a) tidal wetlands; (b) non-tidal wetlands connected by surface flow and contiguous to tidal wetlands or tributary streams; (c) tidal shores; and (d) a 100-foot buffer located adjacent to any of the above type areas (see Figure 1.6). Resource Management Areas (RMAs) should also be delineated on the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area map. Guidelines for such delineation are shown on Figure 1.6, an area defined by a combination of the following: flood prone areas (100-year flood zone); non-tidal wetlands that do not qualify as belonging in the RPA; and steep slopes along stream banks.

Slightly more than 10 percent of the land area in Hopewell, about 730 acres, are delineated wetlands. The majority are located along the streambeds of Baileys Creek and Cabin Creek (see map at Figure 1.8). Non-tidal wetlands are, by definition, in the Chesapeake Bay Resource Management Area, while tidal wetlands are in the Resource Protection Area. The composite effect of wetlands, floodplains and steep stream banks may be seen on Figure 1.6. on which all of the RPAs and RMAs are delineated.

Floodplains are closely related to wetlands but with care, they can be used for more, although limited, purposes. In many cases, floodplains and wetlands are one and the same. But limited use may be made of a floodplain if precautions are taken to protect property from flood damage. The use of floodplains also receives limited protection in that they are included by definition in the Resource Management Area (RMA) of the Chesapeake Bay regulations. In Hopewell, the 100-year floodplain closely follows the streambeds and the shoreline (see Figure 1.7).

Goals	Planning Strategies or Policies
<p>A. Maintain current and updated delineation of Chesapeake Bay Protected Areas.</p> <p>B. Maintain full compliance with the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act and the regulations established by CBLAD.</p> <p>C. Maintain Chesapeake Bay Protected Areas on all City maps.</p> <p>D. Maintain a current and updated map of both tidal and non-tidal wetlands</p>	<p>A. Review and update boundaries of the RPA to reflect current information</p> <p>B. Delineate boundaries for the RMA using CBLAD guidelines.</p> <p>C. Add Chesapeake Bay Protected Areas to the Zoning District Map.</p> <p>D. Prepare or purchase a map showing the wetlands using the National Wetlands Inventory.</p>

## PHYSICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

### Issue 6: Potable Water Supply

Hopewell draws about 21 million gallons of water per day from the Appomattox River near its confluence with the James River. Some 85 percent of that is used by industries within the City. Service is also provided to some areas of Prince George County and Fort Lee.

The Appomattox River, being among longest and least developed rivers in Virginia, provides an abundant supply of high-quality water to the City.

Pollution has the potential to cause havoc with the eco-system of the City and the surrounding area. Baileys Creek has already been listed as an “impaired” water by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality due to bacteria and dissolved oxygen. Point sources of pollution that are near the intake plant include two marinas, one located just west of the Route 10 bridge over the Appomattox and a new marina being established at Anchor Point about two miles up stream.

Another source of pollution that may become a concern is Underground Storage Tanks (USTs). The EPA estimates that as many as 35 percent of all USTs eventually leak. So far Hopewell has had a good track record, recording only 35 leaks in the last 10 years.

Because of a topographic divide, runoff from Hopewell is limited to the area drained by Cabin Creek, therefore, non-point sources of pollution are mitigated by: (a) extensive areas that are not likely to be developed and (b) buffering by areas designated as RMA and RPA.

Goals	Planning Strategies or Policies
A. Promote and maintain the health and cleanliness of the Appomattox River.	A. Monitor water quality near fresh-water intake plant and mitigate conditions that may cause possible contamination.
B. Ensure the continued cleanliness of the river around the fresh-water intake plant.	B. Control point and non-point pollution on the Appomattox River.
C. Mitigate pollution caused by Underground Storage Tanks.	C. Map all USTs in the City and implement a periodic inspection routine.
D. Monitor the viability of the remaining Septic Systems in the City	D. Study the possibility of requiring the remaining septic systems to connect to the City sewage system.
E. Restore the health of Baileys Creek.	E. Determine the sources of the pollution for Baileys Creek and work to eliminate them.

## PHYSICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

### Issue 7: Shoreline Situation

Access to public waters – Boating access to public waters is provided for boat owners and users at the City Marina located just west of the Route 10 Bridge and at a private Marina at Anchor Point. The former site also provides a ramp for private boat launching. There is also access to the James River at the City Point section of the Petersburg National Battlefield. Except for individual properties that may have access to one of the rivers abutting Hopewell, there are no other facilities, public or private, that offer access to state waters. Some opportunity may exist in the areas of Cattail and Baileys creeks for establishment of sites for nature study or picnicking.

Shoreline erosion – The Chesapeake Bay Area Public Access Plan (1990) identified no shorelines in Hopewell that had experienced erosion of more than two- feet per year. There are steep slopes along the Appomattox River, however, that might be vulnerable to erosion at times of extreme storms.

Streambank Erosion—The streams and creeks in Hopewell show no signs of erosion when studied through aerial photographs.

Goals	Planning Strategies or Policies
A. Provide access to and promote public use of the waterfront in Hopewell.	A. Explore potential public access points to state waters along the James River and Baileys Creek.
B. Confirm the shoreline erosion report of the Chesapeake Bay Area Public Access Plan.	B. Develop a Public Access Plan that will allow the City to maximize public recreational access to the various creeks and rivers in Hopewell.
C. Improve access and aesthetics at the City Point section of the Petersburg National Battlefield.	C. Continue to work with the National Park Service to implement a series of walking and interpretive trails at City Point.
D. Get City Marina certified as a Virginia “Clean Marina.”	D. Remove debris from the waterfront along the City Point section of the Petersburg National Battlefield.
	E. Update shoreline erosion data upon completion of Coastal Shoreline Survey for the Hopewell area by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science.
	F. Work with VIMS on “Clean Marina” certification for the City Marina.



## PHYSICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

### Issue 8: Historical and Archeological Resources

Historic Resources include several sites that are on the National Register including the City Point Historic District which includes City Point House (ca 1730), Appomattox Manor (ca 1763), the Porter House (ca 1810), and St. John's Episcopal Church (ca 1840). Weston Manor, located approximately two miles up the Appomattox River, is also on the Register. Other significant historic features include many buildings in the Central Business District and dwellings in Crescent Hills, a community of mostly "Sears, Roebuck" houses built during the late 1920s and early 1930s. Many of these sites are unknown outside of Hopewell and are discovered by accident as people drive through the City. A city-wide comprehensive historical assessment, which can be accomplished through a matching grant from the State Department of Historical Resources, may add more sites to this list.

Goals	Planning Strategies or Policies
<p>A. Generate more tourism through better use of historical sites and structures.</p> <p>B. Create a City-wide database of all historic sites and structures.</p> <p>C. Create historic district overlay zones as the neighborhoods are inventoried.</p> <p>D. Promote preservation of privately-owned historic structures.</p>	<p>A. As resources permit, a neighborhood-by-neighborhood inventory of historical structures should be undertaken.</p> <p>B. Prepare a comprehensive marketing plan to market the historic assets of the City to increase tourism.</p> <p>C. Create a coordinated walking/driving tour of all the historical assets in Hopewell.</p> <p>D. Publicize the tax incentives available to property owners for restoration and rehabilitation of older properties.</p>

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

### Issue 1: SHORTAGE OF COMMERCIAL LAND FOR DEVELOPMENT

It is vital to the well-being of any City to have sufficient land for growth. There is a shortage of vacant commercial land in Hopewell. The largest remaining parcel/parcels of vacant commercial land is/are near Interstate 295. The remaining commercial vacant land is scattered throughout the City in small parcels, which will allow for only limited commercial growth in small pockets. This shortage of vacant land places more emphasis on redevelopment of commercial land in the City. Since there is little prime vacant land left in the city, growth must come primarily through redevelopment.

Goals	Planning Strategies or Policies
<p>A. Promote the sensible use of the remaining vacant commercial land in Hopewell.</p> <p>B. Have a city-wide registry of commercial sites that may be available for redevelopment.</p>	<p>A. Prepare a vacant land study and determine the best use for the remaining vacant commercial land in Hopewell.</p> <p>B. Prepare a city-wide survey of all zoned commercial land in Hopewell to identify parcels for redevelopment potential and develop guidelines for conversion of dwellings to commercial use.</p> <p>C. Random vacant lots and vacant commercial structures are only present opportunities for development other than redevelopment.</p> <p>D. Prepare a Revitalization plan for the CBD.</p>

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

#### **Issue 2: LOT ASSEMBLAGE DIFFICULTIES IN CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT**

The Oaklawn/Woodlawn Corridor Development District is zoned to accommodate a variety of commercial, office, high-density housing, and other uses to take advantage of this unique development opportunity. Significant new development within this district will necessarily require conversions of existing uses, and the assembly of these lots into parcels which can support larger and more comprehensively planned development. The assembly of existing lots into larger parcels will be complicated by the small lot sizes and diverse ownership of lots in the district. This assemblage problem will likely discourage larger developments and may result in the under-utilization of the CDD unless measures can be established to compensate for the difficulty of assembling land.

Goals	Planning Strategies or Policies
<p>A. Encourage assembly of smaller lots into larger parcels to allow for more efficient development and utilization of the B-4 District.</p> <p>B. Discourage conversion of existing smaller residential buildings to commercial uses in the B-4 District; while encouraging new development on larger building sites.</p>	<p>Develop land use regulatory incentives that:</p> <p>A. Promote and encourage assemblage of small lots.</p> <p>B. Encourage replacement of older residential dwellings with newer commercial or residential facilities.</p>

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

### Issue 3: LOT AREA REQUIREMENTS IN CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

Lot area requirements in the Commercial Development District are not coordinated with the typical lot size. Zoning requires a lot area of 12,000 square feet and a width of 100 feet as a minimum for new buildable lots. The area is fully platted, mostly with 25 foot lots, and typical lots are either 145 feet or 200 feet deep. It may be more appropriate to use the 25 foot module as the basis of regulating minimum lots. For example, to get 100 feet of frontage, four 25 foot lots would be required under present regulations. If they were 145 feet deep, the resulting area of four lots would be 14,500 square feet; if they were 200 feet deep, the areas of four lots would comprise 20,000 square feet.

In order to promote redevelopment of these areas to the fullest, the regulation should place more emphasis on the pattern of 25 foot lots rather than minimum area. If a minimum area is required, it should be established around the dimensions of four of the smallest lots. The existing 100 foot frontage requirement appears to be working in the Oaklawn/Woodlawn Corridor and should be continued.

Goals	Planning Strategies or Policies
A. Coordinate the zoning ordinance lot area and dimensional requirements with platted lot sizes of the B-4 District to permit more efficient assembly of existing lots.	A. Set lot size requirements based on frontage rather than the lot area.  B. Set commercial lot frontage at minimum of 100 feet.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUES**

#### **Issue 4: FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRIP COMMERCIAL BETWEEN THE CBD AND THE CITY LIMITS**

The increased traffic and resulting development around the I-295 interchange has increased the opportunity to develop the commercial strip between the City limits and the CBD with additional small businesses. This area has an ample capacity, if not an oversupply of commercial zoning, to accommodate foreseeable commercial growth. But the problem is that much of the existing development consists of small individual lots which are not satisfactory for conversion to commercial uses. Therefore, conversions of existing uses and redevelopment of existing commercial land represent the only viable development opportunity throughout this strip.

Goals	Planning Strategies or Policies
A. Encourage the upgrading and reuse of existing lots along the commercially-zoned strip for a mixture of new commercial and multi-family uses.	<p>A. Develop programs and incentives to promote redevelopment (Enterprise Zones, CDBG, etc.).</p> <p>B. Study traffic flow patterns to improve access to major commercial sites.</p> <p>C. Improve visibility of major shopping facilities.</p>

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

### Issue 5: STABILITY OF THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

Although the Central Business District is relatively isolated from new economic opportunities, it remains a significant and important center of the City. It contains the governmental center, banking institutions, professional offices, some retail commercial development, is located along the Route 10 Corridor, and is the historic center of the City. Growth of the CBD may be limited in the future due to existing development trends. The presence of City Hall, John Randolph Hospital, and a core of professional and retail businesses provides a strong anchor for the stability of the Central Business District. Another attraction for this area is the Hopewell Recreation and Community Center. More effort should be made to draw a connection between the Community Center and the CBD.

The CBD has suffered considerable loss of retail business by the shift of businesses to shopping centers. It would be helpful to prepare a definitive strategy for this area, thus updating and extending prior studies to reflect the current and future conditions. Part of this focus might be on the retail area east of Randolph Road, an area which still has a potential for smaller businesses, specialty shops, offices and restaurants. The employment centers at City Hall and the Hospital provide a stable employment base for the area. Through traffic on Route 10 also contributes economic strength to the area. The potential for exploring the expansion of business, professional and government offices in the area west of Randolph Road is an important anchor to the CBD; this potential should be explored to the fullest extent. There is considerable professional/office development along the fringes of this area. Conversion of smaller single family residences to office space should be encouraged to the west of the City offices.

Goals	Planning Strategies or Policies
<p>A. Ensure the stability of the CBD by continued presence of governmental centers, banking institutions, the hospital, other supporting businesses and public facilities.</p> <p>B. Develop a strategy for the survival of the CBD which focuses on maintaining and increasing a healthy mixture of retail, office, and institutional activities within the area.</p>	<p>A. Re-examine market demand in CBD for commercial, professional, and business offices.</p> <p>B. Re-examine traffic and parking needs.</p> <p>C. Develop incentives to encourage employees in CBD to support the commercial establishments in the CBD.</p> <p>D. Employ public programs to provide growth and usage of CBD.</p>

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

### Issue 6: INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Hopewell had its first period of major growth when the Dupont Company opened a gun cotton manufacturing plant in the City in 1915. Except for brief periods, industry has remained the cornerstone of the economic engine that powers the City. It is essential that the City work to diversify and expand its economy. One problem is the limited availability of vacant land in the City. Much of the vacant industrial land is being held by existing industries for their own expansion. Other problems include vacant land being included in the RPA and vacant land being too rough for development. This limits the opportunity for a new industry to move into the City. The City needs to provide more opportunities for smaller industries to expand, or move into, Hopewell. One alternative is for the City to establish a site for a business and industrial park. This would allow space for new manufacturing companies to move into the City and would allow for expansion of existing industries.

Goals	Planning Strategies or Policies
<p>A Provide more opportunities for new industries and businesses to be established within the City.</p> <p>B Support the needs for growth of existing industries and businesses consistent with their needs for additional land within the resources available.</p>	<p>A Establish an industrial-business park with infrastructure suitable to support a variety of businesses or industries.</p> <p>B Provide assistance where possible to encourage existing industries to expand (example, add flexibility to development regulations).</p>

## POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS ISSUES

### Issue 1: NEED TO USE REMAINING VACANT RESIDENTIAL LAND EFFICIENTLY

Hopewell has a limited supply of vacant residential land available for future growth. If fully developed, an optimum situation not likely to occur, it might meet the needs for land for housing for the next decade or two. Because it is generally impractical to expect land to develop to an ideal extent, Hopewell does not have the range of vacant land that provided a full choice to the building industry. But since the supply is fixed and because the City failed in its last efforts to annex more land, the present supply of prime land will have to serve the City in the foreseeable future. For this reason, emphasis must be placed in the short run on utilizing the remaining vacant land in the most effective and efficient manner.

Goals	Planning Strategies or Policies
<p>A Promote efficient use of the remaining vacant land in large tracts through use of Planned Unit Developments and incentives.</p> <p>B Also promote the development of isolated parcels and random lots in appropriate locations for new housing.</p>	<p>A Provide incentives in the land use regulations to promote the development of subdivisions and planned unit developments (PUD's) on larger, particularly combined, vacant parcels.</p> <p>B Provide incentives in the land use regulations to promote the construction of housing units, preferably intended for home ownership, on isolated parcels within existing residential neighborhoods.</p>



## POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS ISSUES

### Issue 2: CONDITION OF OLDER HOUSING

Much of the existing housing in Hopewell is at least 30 years old and in the latter half of its practical life span. In several sections of the City, the older housing is deteriorating and contributing to the decline of the neighborhood in the surrounding subdivision. Additionally, this can be expected to affect the overall condition of housing in the City and the future population growth. Because this condition can lead to loss of current housing units over time and slow growth, emphasis should be placed on strengthening the condition of existing housing to avoid population loss and weakening future growth in the City. Programs to deal with older housing might focus on: (1) code enforcement, (2) repair and improvement programs designed to upgrade existing housing and (3) programs to encourage more home ownership. The details of these types of programs should be defined by a series of "Neighborhood" studies.

Goals	Planning Strategies or Policies
<p>A Repair and maintain older housing to strengthen the overall quality of housing in the City.</p> <p>B Promote an increase in the share of total housing units that are occupied by owners.</p>	<p>A Identify deteriorated housing conditions and develop a plan and program to upgrade them to acceptable standards.</p> <p>B Undertake a systematic code enforcement program which focuses on identifying deficiencies in housing and provides for their correction. This may focus initially on rental property.</p> <p>C Investigate programs that may be utilized by the City to promote an increase in home ownership within the City.</p>